

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Paperwork Reduction Act, to eliminate the wasteful congressional review process for legislation passed by the District of Columbia Council and to align longtime congressional practice and the law. The congressional review process for D.C. bills is ignored by Congress providing it no benefit, but imposes substantial costs (in time and money) on the District. Congress has almost always used the appropriations process rather than the disapproval process and entirely abandoned the congressional review process as its mechanism for overturning D.C. legislation twenty-three years ago, and only used it three times before that, preferring riders on D.C. appropriation bills instead. Yet Congress still requires the D.C. Council to use Kafkaesque make-work procedures to comply with the abandoned congressional review process established by the Home Rule Act of 1973.

Our bill would eliminate the congressional review process for legislation passed by the D.C. Council. However, Congress would lose no authority it currently exercises because, even upon enactment of this bill, Congress would retain its authority under clause 17 of section 8 of article I of the U.S. Constitution to amend or overturn any D.C. legislation at any time.

The congressional review process (30 days for civil bills and 60 days for criminal bills) includes those days when either house of Congress is in session, delaying D.C. bills from becoming law, often for many months. The delay forces the D.C. Council to pass most bills several times, using a cumbersome and complicated process to ensure that the operations of this large and rapidly changing city continue uninterrupted, avoiding a lapse of the bill before it becomes final. The review period, based on legislative, not calendar, days means, for example, that a 30-day period usually lasts three calendar months and often much longer because of congressional recesses. The congressional review period for a bill that changed the word "handicap" to "disability" lasted nine months. The Council estimates that 50–65 percent of the bills the Council passes could be eliminated if the review period did not exist. To ensure that a bill becomes law, the Council often must pass the same legislation in three forms—emergency (in effect for 90 days), temporary (in effect for 225 days) and permanent. Moreover, the Council has to carefully track the days the House and Senate are in session for each D.C. bill it passes to avoid gaps and to determine when the bills have taken effect. The Council estimates that it could save 5,000 employee-hours and 160,000 sheets of paper per two-year legislative Council period if the review period were eliminated. House Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY addressed the issue of saving such resources by eliminating the amount of paperwork sent to Congress when he proposed a cut in the number of reports that federal agencies are required to submit to

Congress. Our bill is a perfect candidate because it eliminates a paperwork process that repeats itself without interruption.

My bill would do no more than align the Home Rule Act with congressional practice over the last twenty-three years. Of the more than 5,000 legislative acts transmitted to Congress since the Home Rule Act, only three resolutions disapproving D.C. legislation have been enacted—in 1979, 1981, and 1991—and two of those mistakenly involved federal interests in the Height Act and the location of chanceries. Placing a congressional hold on 5,000 D.C. bills has not only proven unnecessary, but has imposed fruitless costs on the D.C. government, residents and businesses. District residents and businesses are also placed on hold because they have no certainty when D.C. bills, from taxes to regulations, will take effect, making it difficult to plan. Instead of using the congressional review process to overturn D.C. legislation, Congress has preferred to use appropriation riders. Therefore, it is particularly unfair to require the D.C. Council to engage in a labor-intensive and costly process that Congress has itself long abandoned. My bill would only eliminate the automatic hold placed on D.C. legislation and the need for the D.C. Council to use a process initially passed for the convenience of Congress, but that Congress has since eliminated in all but law. This bill would promote efficiency and cost savings for Congress, the District, its residents, and businesses without reducing congressional oversight, and would carry out a policy stressed by Congress of eliminating needless paperwork and make-work redundancy.

I urge my colleagues to support this good-government measure.

HONORING DOMINICAN HERITAGE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor the rich culture and heritage of Dominicans, during the month of Carnival, the most important period of religious celebration in the Dominican Republic. Dominicans are dedicated members of our communities and have contributed so much to our country. This month, we take the opportunity to acknowledge and applaud their service to our nation and their many great achievements.

Dominicans in our nation have been motivated by the value of hard work and the bonds of family—the same pillars that have formed the foundation of our society for over 230 years. From Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, the first Dominican-American to serve in the Cabinet, to Pedro Martinez, a former pitcher for the New York Mets who was recently elected to the Hall of Fame, Dominicans are trailblazers who strengthen America's diverse cultural heritage.

Dominicans are one of the fastest growing Hispanic groups in America. 1.5 million people of Dominican descent currently live in the United States. With over 700,000 people, Dominicans are the largest Hispanic group in New York City. I am honored to serve a congressional district with a significant Dominican population. They bring vibrant and rich cultural

and economic contributions to every neighborhood in my district, from Washington Heights to Inwood.

I am fortunate to have many excellent organizations, in my district, that promote Dominican culture and empower Dominicans living in Manhattan and the Bronx. The Dominican Women's Development Center, New York Dominican Officers' Organization, Dominican Medical Association, National Dominican Women's Caucus, Community Association of Progressive Dominicans, Alianza Dominicana, Dominican Bar Association, Association of Dominican Classical Artists, Dominican Cultural Civic Center, Mirabal Sisters Cultural and Community Center all help strengthen their communities and improve the lives of Dominicans in New York.

Like so many generations of immigrants, Dominicans have fought tirelessly to achieve the American Dream. They come to this great nation seeking a home, a place to raise their families, and a community that will nurture their dreams. From the initial wave of Dominican migration in the 1960s to the most recent arrivals of today, Dominicans have graced our nation with their culture and traditions. Their contributions are integral to the success of our great nation and to strengthening the American fabric.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER P. GIBSON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 51; 52; 53 H.R. 361, the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act; H.R. 623, the Social Media Working Group Act; H.R. 615, the Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act.

Due to inclement weather, I was not present for the vote series on Monday, February 2, 2015.

Had I been present, I would have voted AYE.

RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD
(RFS) REFORM ACT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues Representatives PETER WELCH, STEVE WOMACK and JIM COSTA as we introduce the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) Reform Act, a common sense solution to ensure that renewable fuels compete fairly in the marketplace and avoid causing unintended and negative consequences for American consumers.

The federal government's creation of an artificial market for the ethanol industry has quite frankly triggered a domino effect that is hurting our nation's consumers, energy users, livestock producers, food manufacturers, retailers, and natural resources. Renewable fuels play an important role in our all-of-the-above energy policy, but should compete fairly in the marketplace and not be the beneficiary of an anti-competitive government mandate.

American families and businesses should not have to shoulder the high cost of an unworkable federal ethanol mandate through the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the heightened 2017 RFS requirements would increase the amount of total U.S. food expenditures by \$3.5 billion. At the same time, the Department of Energy shows a decrease in fuel mileage—triggering increasing energy costs and lasting impacts on the environment.

The RFS mandates that 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels be part of our nation's fuel supply by 2022. However, in 2014 nearly 40 percent of the U.S. corn crop was used for ethanol production. This is more than the amount of corn used to feed livestock and poultry in the United States.

This is a kitchen table issue—this unworkable policy impacts every American family trying to make financial decisions. From food costs to wear and tear on the family car and other equipment many families use, the RFS means added costs and less money for other purchases.

The RFS debate is no longer just a debate about fuel or food. It is also a debate about jobs, small business, economic growth, and freedom.

The RFS is also hurting—not helping—to preserve our natural resources. The EPA has provided evidence that shows ethanol produced 33 percent more emissions in 2012 than gasoline. The RFS is impacting the quality of life for all Americans. The nation has hit the “blend wall” or the point at which we can no longer blend ethanol into gasoline at levels safe for all engines.

This Congress is the time for RFS reform. The momentum around this issue continues to grow. Last year, we found that more than 218 Members of Congress were on record—either by cosponsoring legislation or signing letters—expressing concerns about the current policy.

The support from various stakeholders also continues to expand as the RFS Reform Act is endorsed by a broad spectrum of groups representing livestock, small engines, taxpayers, restaurants, boats, food manufacturing, environmental issues, and food aid. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Renewable Fuel Standard Reform Act to address the increasing costs of this broken federal policy impacting our nation's citizens.

RECOGNIZING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NYSAC)

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 90th Anniversary of the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC).

NYSAC was established by a group of committed local leaders in 1925 for the purposes of training county officials and advocating for the needs of local governments. Since that time, the organization has become the only statewide association representing the interests of New York's 62 counties, including the five boroughs of New York City.

NYSAC advocates for the interests of taxpayers and county officials at the state and

federal levels of government. In addition, the association provides its members with training, educational resources, and information relating to public policy.

Despite the tremendous diversity found in New York, NYSAC has consistently and effectively promoted the best interests of all its members, from the urban areas downstate to the rural and suburban areas of my congressional district. I commend NYSAC on its ability to combine such different perspectives into a single unified mission that serves the interests of each county.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure to congratulate NYSAC on 90 years of excellent service to the counties, citizens, and officials of the State of New York. The professionalism and commitment displayed by the association's staff have ensured the effective management and delivery of county services. I salute NYSAC for a job well done, and extend my best wishes for continued success in the future.

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF PLAID HOUSE, INC.

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Plaid House, Inc. located in Morristown, New Jersey as it celebrates its 40th Anniversary.

Over the last forty years, Plaid House has stayed true to its mission of providing residential and counseling services to adolescents in northern New Jersey. Since its foundation, the members of Plaid House, Inc. have worked tirelessly to improve the lives of so many young adults, as evidenced by the impact its programs have had on the community.

In December of 1970, Katherine Merck was asked by the Morris County Probation Office if she would be willing to take a seventeen year old girl into her home for the holidays. The local residential treatment center would be closed due to the holidays, and the judge had decreed that the girl, despite lacking a criminal history, would be placed in Clinton State Prison for Women if an alternative could not be found. Upon taking the young woman into her home, Kate learned from the young woman about the numerous girls from the community that were often left without a place to live. So, she decided to start a group home for girls in Morris County, and within a few years, the Plaid House group home opened its doors.

The goal of the Plaid House group home is to provide a complete living experience and therapeutic environment for troubled adolescent girls. The residents of the Plaid House group home are placed there by the Department of Children and Families. The girls can range in age from fourteen to eighteen years old and are accepted from anywhere in New Jersey. Girls are enrolled in local school and encouraged to involve themselves in the community through afterschool programs, working, and volunteering. The group home staff provides a varied schedule throughout the week including recreational and educational activities. All girls regularly participate in individual and group counseling, provided both on site by the Program Manager and off site by therapists in community agencies.

When it opened its doors in 1975, Plaid House group home began with a capacity for five girls and was staffed by two houseparents. Since then, the number of girls at the home has expanded to ten, with supervision increasing to a team of full-time staff working twenty-four hours a day to serve these girls. The group home even underwent an expansion construction project in 2003 to provide much needed additional space and improve the quality of living for its residents.

Plaid House, Inc. also offers Thenen House, which opened in 1989, to provide a supervised transitional living program to young women who have outgrown group homes, but have been assessed as being unable to return home. The residents are young women of ages from sixteen to twenty, who are under the supervision of Child Protection and Permanency and need assistance in preparing for independence. Here the residents are required to participate in a full-time educational and employment program, helping them to develop practical skills, establish emotional independence, and learn budgeting techniques; the budgeting program demands that the women save fifty percent of their wages, which will be returned to them when they leave the program.

Plaid House's Aftercare Program provides counseling to adolescent males and females who have been discharged by Child Protection and Permanency from residential placements or foster care. The goal of the program is to help these young adults transition successfully from out of home placement into the community, whether they are returning to their homes or moving out to live on their own. In addition, Their Aging Out Program serves male and female clients of ages fifteen to twenty who are under the supervision of Child Protection and Permanency and currently in out of home placement. The young adults participate in life skills training, presented in weekly workshops, which follow a curriculum including employment skills, money management, career planning, further education, communication, and problem solving. Each participant completes a skills assessment at the beginning and end of the program to measure the progress made from training.

Since the opening of their group home forty years ago, Plaid House has moved hundreds of young adults through their programs. Though the organization has undergone various changes and improvements since its inception, their commitment to providing these adolescents with opportunities for success has remained constant.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating Plaid House, Inc. its dedicated staff and Board of Directors as it celebrates its 40th Anniversary.

“HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT”

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Brice Kolle for being named the December 2014 Cadet of the Month by the Marine Military Academy. Kolle, a freshman at the Marine Military Academy, hails from my hometown of Sugar Land in TX-22. This esteemed award recognizes his exemplary character, leadership, academic achievement, and